

VZCZCXRO5621
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHNJ #0546/01 3251150
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 201150Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6605
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR PRIORITY 1416
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 0007
RUEHKE/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY 0167
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE PRIORITY 1081
RUEHOU/AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU PRIORITY 0467
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY 0523

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NDJAMENA 000546

SIPDIS

KINSHASA PASS BRAZZAVILLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/19/2012

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER CITES CHADIAN DIPLOMATIC AND
POLITICAL PROGRESS, ESPECIALLY IMPROVED REGIONAL SECURITY

REF: NDJAMENA 532

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Classified By: DCM REGribbin for reasons 1.4 b&d

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Chadian Foreign Minister Faki told Ambassador and DCM November 19 that he attributed last week's Dakar Contact Group meeting's success to incremental steps taken during the past six months to repair Chad's relations with Sudan, but cautioned that more needed to be done, especially de-fanging respective rebels and resolving issues in the troubled border regions, plus continuing to build trust with Khartoum. Faki said Chad would agree to a MINURCAT II military element of 4,000 to 4,500. He noted that internal electoral reform was progressing with the adoption by cabinet of the proper legislation and that elections would be held as scheduled in ¶2009. The Minister was confident that relations with the World Bank/IMF were back on track and that PM Abbas would visit Washington in due course. Faki welcomed Burkina Faso's adhesion to the TSCTP and the projected visit of Mrs. Cindy McCain to eastern Chad. Finally, he was pleased with progress regarding the NEC.

¶2. (C) Ambassador Nigro cited four strategic policy fields in which Chad had made significant progress since February; which we have been flagging to Washington; and which we would emphasize to the incoming administration. These were: improved regional security as evidenced by resumed diplomatic ties to Sudan; Chadian agreement for MINURCAT II and its force composition; progress in implementing internal political reforms, especially electoral preparations; and renewed cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions. The Ambassador recommended that Chad continue to make headway in all four areas, because they were complementary and interdependent.

¶3. (C) Faki appeared relaxed and confident regarding Chad's security situation vis-a-vis Sudan and the Chad rebels there. He has performed well since joining the new government as FORMIN: Chad is stronger diplomatically than before February and the GOC has been persistent and patient in pursuing its key diplomatic goals over the past six months. Faki has managed the proliferation of "initiatives" regarding the Chad-Sudan situation and the closely related one in Darfur.

We believe that Faki understands that Chad's international image and the willingness of key partners to make efforts in its behalf depends on continued progress domestic political reform and putting its public-financial house in better order in collaboration with the IFIs. END SUMMARY.

14. (C) Ambassador accompanied by DCM called on Foreign Minister Moussa Faki Mahamat on November 19. Ambassador congratulated the minister for the success of the recent Dakar Agreement Contact Group meeting and for Chad's persistence in maintaining momentum in moving forward to defuse tensions in the region. Cooperation with Khartoum boded well for further progress. The achievement of stability in the east was essential for effective humanitarian operations, for economic recovery, and for continued internal political reconciliation.

15. (C) Faki said that the recent meeting was the culmination of a process that began in Dakar and carried on through meetings in Tripoli and Asmara. He noted it had been an uneven process, citing events like the June attacks that stalled forward movement. Yet, based on Sudan's perceived "good faith" displayed in Asmara, Chad felt it could move ahead with the exchange of ambassadors. The next step would be placement of border monitors. He agreed that the bilateral climate was indeed better and that an additional gesture of reassurances would likely be a summit meeting of the Chad, Sudan, and Libya chiefs of state. He recalled that Chad had often been accused as a "belligerent" by Khartoum and charged with manipulating Darfurian rebels. He admitted that many rebels have familial ties that transcend the border, but denied any nefarious actions on the part of Chad to undermine the Sudanese regime. Instead, he said that "as a neighbor" Chad could help resolve the conflict, which he reflected was

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in Chad's interest to do. The minister wondered if -- given the amount of arms in circulation -- the various armed groups in Darfur, especially the Janjaweed militias created by the GOS, could ever be disarmed. Regarding Chad's own rebels, the minister said that the Syrte Accord that provides a mechanism for them to return remains valid, and that his government was thinking of ways to reinvigorate this process.

16. (C) Faki said he had received the Qatari deputy minister of foreign affairs just that morning. He understood that JEM representatives will go to Doha. The minister reported that Qatar would not agitate individually for article 16 action deferring the ICC indictment, but that would do that on behalf of the Arab League. The minister noted and the ambassador agreed that there were many initiatives out there, perhaps too many - Libyan, Qatari, AU/UN (Bassole), internal Sudanese ones. Nonetheless, Faki asked that the international community, i.e. the U.S., press the GOS and the rebels directly. Citing multiple divisions within Sudan, Faki said that despite past problems and current difficulties, if the GOS was now sincere and serious, progress towards peace in Darfur could be achieved.

17. (C) Turning to other issues, the Foreign Minister said that discussions with the UN on a followon force to EUFOR were proceeding normally; that Chad would agree to a MINURCAT II with a military element of 4,000 to 4,500; and that the force should have a mandate similar to EUFOR's. If Darfur could be solved soon, he said refugees could go home.

18. (C) Regarding the August 13 Process, the minister admitted delays, but reported that Chad's electoral reforms were now back on track. The cabinet had recently approved the necessary draft legislation and forwarded it to the National Assembly. The adoption of texts for the electoral commission, the electoral code, and the judicial process would allow the census to proceed, to be followed by voter registration and the long-expected communal and legislative elections in 2009.

¶9. (C) Ambassador Nigro welcomed the minister's extensive overview. He said at this time of transition in Washington it was useful to sum up developments in Chad. On the positive side Chad had indeed moved ahead in several important areas: regional cooperation as evidenced by the exchange of ambassadors and growing dialogue with Khartoum; the success of EUFOR and Chad's agreement for MINURCAT II; resumed progress on internal political reforms, especially the electoral schedule; and renewed efforts to regularize relations with the World bank and the IMF. In particular, Chad's friends wanted to see an end to the Chad-Sudan "proxy war" between rebels based on opposite sides of the border.

¶10. (C) Since the Minister had not mentioned Chad-SPLM contacts on Darfur, the ambassador asked about it. Faki said indeed the SPLM mission had been useful. They came to learn and listen, which not all of Chad's Sudanese interlocutors were always so willing to do. Faki felt their role as participants in the Khartoum government gave them leverage and he hoped they would use all their weight to work for peace.

¶11. (C) Responding to the Ambassador's points on the World Bank and IMF, Faki said that the current dialogue was positive; that PM Abbas would travel to Washington to meet leaders there in due course; and that reopening of the Bank's Chad office would be welcome.

¶12. (C) The Minister volunteered that Chad posed no objections to the inclusion of Burkina Faso in the Trans Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership. In fact, he added that bringing Ouagadougou in made good sense as the range of issues to be addressed regionally certainly affected Burkina Faso as well.

¶13. (U) The ambassador advised that Mrs. Cindy McCain planned to visit in early December. This would be a private visit geared to her interest in humanitarian issues. The minister said she would be most welcome.

¶14. (U) In closing the minister asked about the status of the New Embassy Complex. We advised satisfactory progress and that the next step would be agreement on a memorandum of

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understanding relating to the legal swap of properties.

COMMENT

¶15. (C) Faki appeared relaxed and confident regarding Chad's security situation vis-a-vis Sudan and the Chad rebels there. He has performed well since joining the new government as FORMIN. Chad is stronger diplomatically than before February and the GOC has been persistent and patient in pursuing its key diplomatic goals over the past six months. Faki has managed the proliferation of "initiatives" regarding the Chad-Sudan situation and the closely related one in Darfur. We believe that Faki understands that Chad's international image and the willingness of key partners to make efforts in its behalf depends on continued progress domestic political reform and putting its public-financial house in better order in collaboration with the IFIs.

¶16. (U) Tripoli Minimize Considered.
NIGRO